

A
DEFENCE
Of Some
CONSIDERATIONS
Concerning the
TRINITY,
AND
The Ways of Managing that
Controversie,
Against the
OBJECTIONS
OF THE
Dean of St. Pauls.

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O F
Some Considerations
Concerning the
TRINITY, &c.

Against the
OBJECTIONS of Dr. Sherlock,
Dean of St. Pauls.

IN a late Discourse intituled, *The Present State of the Socinian Controversie, &c.* the Dean of St. Pauls has thought fit to spend a whole Chapter upon *some Considerations* that had been published long before upon the Subject of the *Trinity*. And I cannot but account it some kind of Honour to me, that, when he had good reason to be
A weary

2 *A Defence of some Considerations*

weary of his Contests with greater Men, he should condescend to take so much pains with the *Considerer*: But the more honour there is in being Attackt, the more care and concern is there requir'd in Defending; and therefore I hope, I may, without just censure, be allowed to Answer a heavy Charge brought against me, whatever Name or Character the Person bears that brings it; especially since I promise to be as short as I can, to put the whole Cause upon this Issue, and not to trouble the World with any further Replies or Rejoinders.

p. 51. 'Tis in the Second Chapter of his Book that the Dean *examines* the *Considerations*; and in his first entrance upon the Work, he is pleased to pass a great Complement upon the Author for his *Temper* and *Civility*; but I found upon reading the whole Chapter through, that his Kindness was like an *Embrace* before *drawing*; only the Ceremony was not performed with so much Honour as the Men of the Sword generally observe: For they seldom use these little previous Civilities to one another but when they are resolved to Fight fair; but I cannot say I have met with all that *Civil Usage* from the Dean which his Complement gave me reason to expect, and his positive Promise assured me of. If I had, both his Chapter, and my Answer to it, had been much shorter; and I should have had
no

no occasion to trouble my Readers with the following Heads; which, as the Case now stands, is the best Method I could contrive for their ease in reading, who are not so far disgusted against that tedious way of writing, Answerers are obliged to, but they will have the curiosity to look into these Papers.

In the First place then I shall give a general Account of the Dean's *Civil Usage* and Treatment of me.

Secondly, I shall defend my self from the Charge of *Sabellianism*.

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to Vindicate the *Design* of the *Considerations*, and shew what Grounds I had for not insisting upon *Tradition* and the Authority of the *Fathers*.

Fourthly, I shall humbly offer some Reasons why I think the Dean's way of Managing the Controversie about the *Trinity* is not the most Expedient.

I. And First, as to Dr. *Sherlock's* Usage of me; if it shall plainly appear that he does highly misrepresent me; that he all along finds fault when there is no occasion; and that he oftentimes finds fault with me for the same things he is pleased to own himself: If he puts the worst and most invidious Construction upon every thing I say, and insinuates worse things

4 *A Defence of some Considerations*

than he is able to wrest from my words; If he picks out Passages to except against, and takes no notice of others that directly overthrow his Exceptions; And lastly, if he accuses me of *Heresie*, and a great many other heinous Matters, without any foundation for his Charge but what's of his own laying: If, I say, it can be made very evident that these things are so; it will not, I hope, be counted rudeness in me if I do not return the Complement the Doctor gave me, and commend *his Temper and Civil way of finding Fault*.

Now that the Dean has used the *Considerer* in this manner, does not, I think, need any long proof: Whoever will be at the pains to read over the *Considerations* again, I am confident will make all those Reflections upon his way of *examining* them, which I had rather any body else should make than my self.

But, because it is not reasonable to expect that others should be concerned to do me Justice, when I have not that sense of my being injured as to put them in mind of it; I think my self obliged to represent the Usage I have met with in a few Instances, and then leave it to my Readers to examine them by the Characters before laid down.

Pref. State
P. 52.

The first thing the Dean takes occasion to find fault with me for in the *Considerations*, is my saying *The uncertainty*
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of our Faith in these Points; which he interprets to be spoken concerning the *Trinity*, as if I had affirmed that the Christian Faith concerning the *Trinity* which was revealed in the Gospel and confirmed by the universal Tradition of the Catholick Church for Sixteen hundred years was *Uncertain*: Whereas it is evident from the words immediately foregoing those that he quotes, that the *Points* in which I said our Faith is *Uncertain*, were Confid. p. 1. the several Modes and Ways of Explaining the common undivided Nature and Essence of the *Trinity*, and the different Offices and Operations of each Person. Now, if I am not very much prejudiced in my own Cause, I cannot but think that the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, and the *Ways and Modes of Explaining the Trinity*, are very different Points; and, if I remember right, the Dean has several times in his Book considered them as such, and very justly made it a Matter of great importance to distinguish carefully betwixt them. Something very like it I am sure he says in this very Paragraph, where he would have me mean otherwise; for he tells us, *It concerns Good men to distinguish the Catholick Faith from the Disputes about Ecclesiastical words, and the Catholick sense of them, that so the Faith may be secure.* How came it to pass then that the Dean could not distinguish these Points in the Considerations? This I believe cannot easily be accounted for any

6 *A Defence of some Considerations*

other way, than by what he lays down upon another occasion, that tho' he *allows himself* to use such Distinctions as these, he will not *allow this to the Considerer*.

The next resolution the Dean took to be offended at me, sprung from a dislike I p. 52. shew'd to those who are for *Receiving the Mystery of the Trinity without looking into it at all*, and for believing what is proposed to them as an Article of Religion with an *implicit Faith*: And indeed I cannot help thinking, that what he objects to me here proceeded from a resolution of finding Matter against me, rather than from any just occasion given him, as will easily appear to any one that duly considers his Remarks upon this Passage.

The first Reason he gives for his being Offended with me was, That *he believed I could not name any such whose avowed Principle this of an implicit Faith is*. But, I believe I could, and it must be allowed me, that I had more reason to know whether I could or not, than he had: However, if I did not expressly know of any body *whose avowed Principle this was*, yet if I had ever heard of *any such*, or if it was very likely there might be *some*, whether I had heard of them or no, it will sufficiently justify what I said, who had no design of marking out any particular Persons, but only of shewing the inexpediency of such a Principle in relation to the Controversie of the Trinity, whoever it was maintained by. But,

But, that there are some certain Christians who do openly *avow* this Opinion which I declared against, the Dean assures us in the next words to those I quoted before, which are these; That *an implicit Faith is only Meritorious in the Church of Rome*; And I was not so ignorant as not to have heard that this was a *Papish Doctrine* before: For the Papists, who make use of this way to guard all their unscriptural and absurd Tenets, and some weak and unwary Protestants, who, by imitating them in this Method with respect to the Mystery of the Trinity, afford the general Principle too much countenance, were the only Persons I designed my Reflection should reach.

Why is it then that I am blamed by the Dean for expressing my *dislike* of an *implicit Faith*, and of those who profess and recommend it to us? Is it because there are none of this *odd sort of Faith*, as he seems to intimate by his telling me I cannot *name any such*, and so my concern about it was impertinent? 'Tis plain he cannot mean thus, because he lodges this Principle among the Papists. And if the Papists are the *only* Persons who believe thus absurdly *they know not what nor why*, as he affirms, what reason has he to extend my Reflection any further? Why should he say just afterwards, that those Expressions I use concerning *some* who profess such a Faith as this, are

P. 52.

8 A Defence of some Considerations

p. 52. *very severe and scandalous Reflections upon some of the Wisest and Greatest Men among us.* 'Tis certain the Dean does not think *the Wisest and Greatest Men among us* Papists; and I am sure such Protestants as do in any Instance take up with their implicit Faith, do much less deserve those Characters. Who they were he guess'd me in this place to have aim'd at, I cannot in the least imagine; nor can I find out any reason why he should tax me now for close premeditated designs of Scandal, when he seems to be of opinion just before, that I had thrown out a general Character at random, without knowing who it belong'd to.

But to make it appear more fully that I did not do well to Condemn those *who are for Receiving the Mystery of the Trinity without ever looking into it all*; he acquaints us that the Protestant Divines do look into this Mystery as far as they can, till Revelation bounds their Prospect, and their People are taught to do so too. This, he says, is not to Reverence the Mystery without looking into it all, but to look into it as far as God would have us, and as far as is necessary to all the Purposes of Religion, that is as far as the knowledge of this Mystery is of any use to us. And
 p. 54. *when this is done, there are a great many wise Men who think they ought to look into this Mystery no farther; and there seems to be a very good reason for it, because with all our looking we can see no further.*

Now

Now the business of my Book being to prove, that we ought to *look into the Mystery of the Trinity* thus far and *no further*, I thought it very proper and agreeable to my Design, to shew my *dislike* of those who were not for *looking into it at all*; and of such as were for prying into it too far. The generality of Protestants are not, I thank God, blameable upon either of these accounts, especially *the Wisest and Greatest among them*. But still I think that *some* are, and whatever the Dean has said upon the same Head, has only shew'd that he was extreamly disposed to find Fault, when he had no other Grounds to go upon than what I have now mentioned.

This is of it self sufficient to satisfy any indifferent Man what a severe Examiner the Dean is like to prove: But how hard a thing it is for me to express my self in such a manner as to escape his Censure, will, if that be possible, appear more plainly from the following Instance than the former.

In the *Considerations* I assert, that 'tis impossible to believe what implies a contradiction to our former Knowledge; such Knowledge I mean as is accompanied with Certainty and Evidence. Now I took this to be as safe a Proposition to assert, as any was within the whole compass of our Thoughts; and I did not only find my self very well assured of it, but I was strongly persuaded I had most
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Confid.
P. 14.

10 *A Defence of some Considerations*

of the Learned World of my opinion in this matter. But Dr. *Sherlock* says *this*

Pres. State
p. 83.

Proposition is false; and therefore as Self-evident as I think it, I must never

offer to maintain such a Paradox again. Had he made use of his Authority only against me, I should, I confess, have been a little unwilling to part with my Proposition; But 'tis in vain I see to stand by it, after the Reason he gives for its being False; For as he truly affirms, it must be owned that *we do believe and know that there really are such things as Heat and Cold, White and Black, &c. whose Natures are directly opposite and contrary to one another.* 'Tis true indeed, I am not yet perfectly satisfied of the Dean's new Philosophy, That there are many *Ideas* which *contradict* one another, without being made to do so in a Proposition; That *Contrarieties* and *Contradictions* are the same; That there are any other *Contradictions* besides Logical ones; or, That the single *Idea* of *White*, by the help of *is* and *is not*, does not produce a better *Contradiction* than *Black and White* together are able to do; These, I must needs say, are new Truths to me, and such as I never before met with: but I am so sensible of the Force of them, that if they should all hold good, 'tis impossible that my *Self-evident Proposition* should stand before them: but I had much rather they should not;
for

for then I could Answer the Challenge he makes me much better, and shew him, that there is not any appearance at all of Contradictions in the Doctrine of the Trinity; and that what we know of God and this Mystery, is not a direct Contradiction to all or any of the Ideas we have of Creatures, as he thinks fit to say it is, by way of Answer to my Proposition, that it is impossible to believe what implies a Contradiction. But if he can't disprove my Proposition without making Contradictions in the Trinity, and I have occasion for it to shew there are none, I think I may venture to keep my Proposition still.

Pres. State
p. 83.

p. 84.

Just such another Philosophical Quarrel as this, the Dean has with me about my Notions of Unity: He wonders mightily why I should reduce all my Notions of Unity to these Three Heads; Unity of Idea, Principle and Position; Why I take no notice of that old received Distinction of One, that *unum est indivisum in se*; and why among all my natural Ideas I should not find this Notion of Unity, which is the only natural Notion of the Divine Unity, and belongs to no other Being: But to clear up his Wonder, and to give him as satisfactory an Account of my Conduct in this Matter as I can; I do assure him, that I take that Notion of Unity he likes so very well, to be a good old definition of One; and because

p. 91.

12 *A Defence of some Considerations*

I was willing it should continue as it always was, the *definition of Unity in General*, when I was reckoning up the several *kinds and sorts* of Unity, I had no mind to make that one of them, for fear they should, by that means, have all wanted some common Definition to agree in, which might, by confounding the Old Distinction of *Genus and Species*, have produced a further Innovation in *our Logicks*.

Several other Cavils and Objections of the like Nature and Force, my *Words and Notions* have been the innocent Occasions of: But I am not much concerned either for my *Language* or *Philosophy*, if my *Faith* be but sound and well grounded; and therefore I shall leave them to the Reader's Mercy, and consider what *Creed* the Dean has drawn up for me. And here I find by the *opening of the Sabellian Scene*, that his *Civility* begins to thicken upon me, for his representation of my *Faith* is this: That the *Considerer* expressly owns, that there is but One who is God, but One Divine Person as well as One Divine Nature; and that I endeavour to prove, that the *Catholick Faith* asserted and defended by the Church against Sabellius, is absolutely impossible.

The Vindication of my self from this Charge belongs to another Head: All that I have to say to it here is, that I am not justly represented; and this will manifestly appear from the Arguments

guments the Dean brings to justifie his Narrative.

Now for the Proof of this Point, that I expressly maintain, that there is but One Divine Person, he urges what I say, That God can be but One single Person in the first sense of the word Person, as it signifies a particular intelligent Being, Nature, or Principle; From whence it must be inferred, that I say, God can be but One single Person in any other sense of the word, tho' I endeavour to prove the contrary: But not to insist upon this Inference, which is manifestly false; I am willing to allow his Argument to be good, That I do absolutely maintain, that God is but one single Person, whatever I may say or pretend to the contrary, if that Sense of the word Person I here mention be properly applicable to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and there is no other Orthodox Notion of Person but this: But I have great reason to think it cannot be so, from the Dean's own Account of this Matter: For he expressly tells us, That the Divine Persons are not distinguished by any difference of Nature, or of Principle; One and the same undivided Nature and Principle being and acting in Three; but by Personal Differences; as, that the Father is unbegotten, the Son begotten, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from Father and Son. 'Tis improper, he says in another place, to

Consid.
p.

p. 95.

p. 96.

p. 95.

p. 200.

call

14 *A Defence of some Considerations*

call the Divine Persons Individuals, because they have not three individual Divine Natures; and we must not form such a Notion of Three
 p. 253. *Persons as of Three Men.* From all which I humbly conceive, I have good reason to conclude, That the *Three Persons in the Godhead* are not *Three particular or individual intelligent Beings, Natures, or Principles; nor are Three Persons as Three Men are Three Persons;* which was the thing I undertook to shew in the *Considerations*.

This is the main Argument the Dean makes use of, to shew, that I do certainly own and endeavour to prove, that *God is but one single Person;* and the Reader will see the Force of it more clearly, if he will turn back to the 84th. page of his Book; for there he will find him taking me to Task for saying that *One and the same God is Three Persons;* which Proposition,

he affirms, to be in the most obvious
 p. 85. *Sense of these words, manifest Heresie;* and he is mightily afraid was intended so by the Considerer. From whence it evidently follows, that I must needs endeavour to prove the Catho-

lick Faith concerning a Trinity impossible,
 p. 88. by maintaining, that *God is but One single Person;* because I am guilty of manifest
 p. 85. *Heresie, in affirming, that God is Three Persons.*

But to bring off this seeming Contradiction, the Dean will make me say, there are *Three Persons*

Persons in the Godhead in another sense of the word *Person* I mention, as it signifies an *Office, Character, or some such Complex Notion applicable to an intelligent Being*; and that this is all the *Personal Distinction* I allow in God; tho' I do expressly prove, that the word *Person*, when applied to *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, is improperly used in this Sense, and falls short of the *Distinction* signified by those terms in Scripture: And he brings me in dealing so plainly in the Case, as to call them *Figurative Persons*, tho' I never heard of the Expression before, and do not understand it now. As for any other Distinction of *Hypostases* or *Persons* besides that of *Names, External Offices, and Relations*, (which I suppose are his *Figurative Persons*) he says I absolutely Reject it; and the Reason he gives for it is, because I will not allow that that *Threefold Difference or Distinction* which belongs to God, can be any other, but such as is consistent with the *Unity and Simplicity of the Divine Nature*.

But I hope this Reason does not hold, because then there will be no avoiding *Sabellianism* without falling into *Tritheism*; For if there be not such a *Threefold Distinction* belonging to God as is consistent with the *Unity of the Divine Nature*, it necessarily follows from hence, that, if there be any *Distinction of Divine Persons* at all, there must be *Three Gods*.

p. 88.

Confid.
p. 26.

Confid.
p. 32.

p. 112.

p. 110.

16 *A Defence of some Considerations*

I do not say that Dr. *Sherlock* means to lead us into *Tritheism*, by the strange Arguments he brings to prove me a *Sabellian*; 'tis plain from another thing he objects to me concerning the Distinction of Persons in the Godhead that he does not: For, tho' I do plainly assert in the *Considerations*, That *Father, Son and Holy Ghost are Three Persons*, and, as he has here proved, I do affirm, they are *Three Persons in such a Sense as is consistent with the*

p. 92. *Unity of the Divine Nature*; yet in another place of his Book he blames me for having no regard to the different Notions of *Nature and Persons*; and for taking no notice of that *Old Catholick Distinction*, that *God is One in Nature and Three in Persons*. 'Tis certain then from hence, that the Dean does himself believe, that *God is One in Nature and Three in Persons*, in the Catholick Sense of those Notions, and consequently that *there is such a Distinction belonging to God, as is consistent with the Unity of the Divine Nature*; For otherwise he would not have been so overmuch concerned for this Distinction of *Nature and Person*, as to blame me for taking no notice of it, without considering that I had insisted upon it.

But, as willing as I am to put the best Construction I can upon the Dean's Principles, I cannot possibly entertain so favourable Thoughts of his way of Treating me; For, besides that I plainly own, *God is One in Nature and Three*

in Persons; and therefore there was no occasion at all to tax me with a Neglect of that *Catholick Distinction*; I cannot but think that he lays more stress upon the Use of *these different Notions of Nature and Person* than he had leave from his own Principles to do; only that I might appear more blameable for my supposed *no regard* to them: And the Reason of my thinking so is, because in another Chapter of his Book, when he is got a great way off of this place, he freely confesses, that he is not satisfied of that absolute necessity which some pretend of stating Nicely and Philosophically this Distinction between Nature and Person in order to understand the Doctrine of the Trinity: For he is of opinion, that Men who understand little of this Distinction, may believe very Orthodoxly in Father, Son and Holy Ghost without it. Whether these are very severe and scandalous Reflections upon some of the Wisest and Greatest Men among us; as some of those who pretend there is such a necessity of distinguishing rightly between Nature and Person are; and whether the Reflections are not such as Dr. Sherlock had little Reason for, I shall not take upon me to say. But this I am sure of, That, if I had not made use of that Distinction of Nature and Person, as I manifestly have, and had not lookt upon it to be a very good, very old, and very necessary Distinction, as I really do, yet the Dean had no reason to

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18 *A Defence of some Considerations*

bring my Faith into question upon that Pre-
tence; since, by his own Confession, a Man may
believe very Orthodoxly without it.

The Dean having given such an Account of
what he calls the *Considerers Way*, and
P. 219. *express Doctrine*, as to make him believe
a *Trinity in One single Person*, distinguished
only by three Names or Personal Characters;
he does, agreeably to the way of Representers,
introduce him as believing only an *Inspired*
Man for a *God Incarnate*. And this new Article
exhibited against me, is just as well founded as
the other: For, after I had proved from Scrip-
ture that *Christ was God*, one and the same God
with the Father, from the same Divine Worship
being pay'd him; from all the same Characters
of God being attributed to him; and from his
being joined with the Father in the same terms
of Baptism, Salutation and Blessing: And, after
I had proved that he was both God and Man
by the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him
Bodily, he comes and charges me with deny-
ing the Divinity of our Saviour, only because
I cannot explain how God and Man are
Consid. united; tho' at the same time I venture
P. 51. to say, that I can conceive God and Man
United, as well as I can conceive Body and Soul
United; which, I think, expresses as strong a
Belief of this Point as Words can declare.

But

But if all this is not sufficient to convince him that I do believe *Christ was God*, I am sure this Expression of mine ought to have done it; that *Christ was as conscious of all the Divine Perfections in himself, as a Man is conscious of his own Thoughts*. For, as he himself truly argues from hence, *this was impossible without being true and perfect God in his own Person*. P. 13.
P. 118.

If I have no where in the Considerations used these terms *Incarnate* and *Incarnation*; I do assure him it was for no other Reason but because they did not offer themselves to me before those I did use: For I make no scruple at all of expressing my self in any Terms so well established as these are; Tho' I do freely acknowledge, that I am extremely cautious with regard to any other Words that have not the same Authority and determined Signification as these have. But the want of these Terms shall be a great Crime in me, and a certain Argument of my not believing that *God was made Flesh*, tho' I declared my Faith of the Article in never so many other Terms, that were as full and expressive as these, and by the generality of Christians better understood.

Such is the *Civil Usage* I have met with from the Dean throughout his whole Examination of my Book; as would be very easie to shew, by a particular Answer to every thing

20 *A Defence of some Considerations*

he Cavils at, if I mistrusted my own Cause or my Readers Judgment so much, as not to think there is enough said already to satisfy any body who is concerned to know the truth of this Matter, that Dr. *Sherlock* has very widely and unreasonably Misrepresented me. Any Man that will be at the trouble of *examining* the *Considerations* after the Dean, will himself supply my Answer to all the other Passages he has censured: For he must needs perceive, upon reading that little Discourse through, that the Dean was some way or other disposed to suspect me of *Sabellianism*, and that afterwards he interpreted every thing I said according to his own Suspicions; that he taxes me with Opinions that I set up only in order to Confute; and that he condemns me for not believing a thing before I come to the proper place I proposed to consider it in.

This I think is very easily perceivable, and is what I have more than ordinary Reason to complain of; because the Dean uses all other Accounts of the Trinity more Favourably than mine; tho' in all appearance as far removed from the *only True one, his own*.

As for Example; He does in several places of his Book, and particularly *Chap. 4.*
 p. 188. *Seet. 8.* endeavour to bring off the *Schoolmen* for calling the *Three Persons* in the *Godhead, Relations, and Properties.*

Seet.

SECT. 9. of the same Chapter, he Vindicates the *Fathers* for distinguishing the *Three Divine Persons* by different Characters, and Modes of Subsistence, which they call *ὑποστάσεις*, and is the only Distinction, as he there acknowledges, which the *Catholick Fathers* allow between the *Three Divine Persons*. P. 362.

Further in the same Section, all such Expressions as imply that the *Father* is God in a more excellent and eminent Sense than the *Son* or *Holy Ghost*; or that the *Father alone* (strictly speaking) is a Being absolutely Perfect, he judges are inconvenient ways of speaking, and liable to great Cavils and Misconstructions: But, notwithstanding this, he is willing to allow they may be expounded to a very *Catholick Sense*; tho' an absolute perfect God, and a God that wants any Perfection, he thinks, sounds not only like two Gods, but like Gods of different kinds. All that is meant by such Expressions as these, he grants is certainly *True* and *Catholick*; and consequently that a *Trinity* which sounds like *Three Gods* of different kinds, may have a *Catholick Meaning* under it. P. 372.

Afterwards he helps out the *Schoolmen* again, by shewing us in what Sense some of them thought it very *Orthodox* to say *THREE GODS*, if we took care to explain what we meant by it. P. 384.

22 A Defence of some Considerations

And indeed, he is particularly kind to the Schoolmen; for, besides this, and the Instance before mentioned, he is at a great deal of pains to shew in the Seventh Chapter, *That tho' the Schools have changed the Ancient Catholick Language, by teaching, that the Divine Essence is One in Number and Singular; whereas the Catholick Fathers denied that God was One in Number, but only in Nature; yet they meant the very same thing, and their Philosophy about Singularity and Number was the same.*

If therefore by the Dean's Favour and special Allowance, *Three Relations, Three Properties, Three Characters, Three Modes of Subsistence, and THREE GODS,* may have a *True and Orthodox Signification* given them, and *teaching Unity of Number* may be reconciled to a *denial of Unity of Number*; I must take the liberty to say, it was somewhat unkind in the Dean, not to find out some *Orthodox Sense* to explain my Words in too; especially since I have made use of no such obnoxious Terms as most of those he has pleased to defend are.

But suppose I had with the Noëtians and Sabellians, turned the *Three Divine Persons* into *Three Names* or *Three parts* of *One Person* (as I never did any thing like it) yet since this, by his own confession, has much more Sense in it than *Three Modes*, and *Three Modes* are capable of an *Orthodox Exposition*, as he himself has proved, I might reasonably have

have expected to escape better than I do, if the Dean had been inclined to shew me any Favour.

Nay further, had I made *Father, Son and Holy Ghost* only *Figurative Persons* (which the Dean very unjustly charges me with)

yet since he owns there is *some Sense* P. 22.
in which we may allow *Father and Son* to be *Metaphorical Names*, I cannot but fancy, if he had heartily intended *Civility*, he could have found out *some Sense* or other in which *Figurative Persons* might be allowed too.

But when I never thought that *Father, Son and Holy Ghost* were any thing like *Three Parts*; when I positively maintain and endeavour to prove, that they are more than *Three Names* or *Three Modes* (as *Modes* signifie the *Modes of One Person*, and not *Three Per-*

sons, in the *Catholick Sense* of *τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις*;) and when I firmly believe them to be *Three Proper*, and not *Three Figurative Persons*; why might not I have been brought off as well as others, and had some fair and *Orthodox Meaning* put on my Words by a Man that had shewn so much Candor upon the like Occasions?

What the Reason of this different Conduct was, does not yet appear; but so it is, that the Dean has Treated me after a very particular manner; and has found out such *Meanings, Senses and Significations* for my Words, as can

24 A Defence of some Considerations

never be reconcil'd to the *Catholick Rules of Expounding Language*. But bare Misrepresentation might easily have been set right, or neglected, if he had not taken occasion from hence to accuse me, as he does, either in Express Terms, or by plain Insinuations, of *Heretic, Sophistry, and dishonest Dealing; denying Mysteries, preferring Reason to Scripture, want of due regard to the Fathers*.

This indeed is a very terrible Accusation; but having shewed already that his Evidences don't agree; that they don't prove what they were brought for, if they held together; and that there is great appearance of Pique and Resentment in the Prosecution; my Defence of my self will be easie and lie in a narrow room.

II. In the next place then I shall Defend my self from the Charge of *Sabellianism*.

And if I can acquit my self well upon this Head, I shall fully Answer the Dean's Three first Articles of *Heretic, Sophistry, and dishonest Dealings*. For, tho' *Socinianism* be sometimes insinuated to blacken the Accusation, I am at other times so solemnly purged from that Guilt, that upon the whole Matter I can find nothing of *Heretic* cleave to me but *Sabellianism*; And therefore, if I can clear my self

self wholly of this Imputation, I must be allowed to have meant as well as spoken *Orthodoxly*, and consequently to have dealt *Honestly*, and to have used no Art or *Sophistry* in my Expression.

Now in order to overthrow his Charge of *Sabellianism*, I must suit my Defence to his way of drawing it up; and shew First, that *I my self* am not guilty of the *Sabellian* p. 86.
Heresie, and Secondly, that *my Words* are not.

That I am not a *Sabellian* I prove from the Account he gives us of the Opinions of *Noëtus* and *Sabellius* concerning the *Trinity*:

For they, as he tells us, affirm, that p. 70.
Father, Son and Holy Ghost are but *Three Names* of the same Person; who is sometimes called the *Father*, at other times the *Son* or the *Holy Ghost*, with respect to his different *Appearances* or *Operations*: Or they made the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* not *Two Persons*, but *Two Personal Attributes* in God, his *Wisdom* or *Power*: Or they made the *Trinity* but *Three parts* of one compounded God, as a *Man* consists of *Body, Soul and Spirit*. But all these Opinions I reject and condemn; and look upon as *Heresies* justly rejected and condemned by the *Catholick Church*; and therefore, if this be a true and full Representation of *Sabellianism*, as no doubt it must, I am as sure I am no *Sabellian* as I am sure I know my own Thoughts.

And

26 *A Defence of some Considerations*

And further, I am not only sure of this now, but I had the same Notions of the *Trinity*, and the same assurance of my Faith when I writ the *Considerations*: And, as far as I know any thing of the Force and Propriety of the English Tongue, I think I have expressed my self as fully There as Here.

For what can be more plain than what I assert in my *Preface* to that Discourse, that a *pure Nominal Distinction* seems to me utterly irreconcilable to the *Language and Design of Scripture*? And agreeably to this, I do not only say, but endeavour to prove in the Book, that the *Three Persons in the Godhead* are not *Three* in that Sense only of the word *Person* in which it is taken for an *Office, Character, Relation, or* *such like complex Notion applicable to an* *Intelligent Being*; because such an Account of the *Trinity* as this, falls far short of those high Expressions of Distinction found in Scripture; and because the *Trinity* would then be no *Mystery*, as Christians have always thought, and I undertook to shew it to be.

But, not to multiply Quotations of this kind, when one is sufficient; I will take leave to Transcribe that Account I give of the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, when I come to sum up my whole Opinion together which I had been proving before by Parts; and which the Dean had not *Patience* to read before he finished his Examination of my Book.

‘ This

‘ This then is the utmost we are
 ‘ required to believe, or are capable of *Confid.*
 ‘ believing concerning the Trinity: *P. 59, 60.*
 ‘ viz. That these Three different Terms, Father,
 ‘ Son, and Holy Ghost, are all applied in Scrip-
 ‘ ture to the One only Supreme God; that all
 ‘ the Actions, Offices, and Relations which are
 ‘ in Scripture ascribed to any of these Names
 ‘ (excepting those proper to the Human Nature
 ‘ of Christ) are there plainly attributed and do
 ‘ truly belong to one and the same Divine Nature;
 ‘ That there are such frequent and evident
 ‘ Assertions of the Unity of God in Scripture,
 ‘ and yet such plain Expressions of Distinction
 ‘ signified by these Terms Father, Son and
 ‘ Holy Ghost, as imply a Consistency of Unity
 ‘ and Distinction in the Godhead: That this
 ‘ Distinction, wherever it be, is not the same
 ‘ with that we conceive betwixt the Attri-
 ‘ butes of God, which are Partial Concep-
 ‘ tions of his Essence, nor a meer Difference
 ‘ of Name, Office, or Relation, (tho’ these are
 ‘ all the Differences we can expressly conceive as
 ‘ applicable to the Divine Nature) but some
 ‘ other Distinction which we have but a confu-
 ‘ sed Perception of, and cannot comprehend or
 ‘ explain by any particular Ideas; which un-
 ‘ known inexplicable Distinction is the Foundati-
 ‘ on of all those Differences expressly conceivable
 ‘ by us.

Which

28 *A Defence of some Considerations*

Which *unknown Distinction* is said before to have been an *Eternal Distinction in the*
p. 55. *Godhead*, and to be very fitly and properly express'd by the Church, by the
p. 49. word *Person*; as I do likewise in the same page affirm, That the *Name of each Person does include the whole Idea of God in it.*

And immediately after this summary Account of my Faith which I have now repeated, I declare it my Opinion, That the *Athanasian Creed is as Rational an Explication of the Trinity as can well be made.*

From all which I think it necessarily follows, that I do not make the *Three Persons in the Godhead only Three Names or Three Parts, or the Son and Holy Ghost only Two Personal Attributes*, as the *Sabellians* did; and therefore my *Words* cannot be guilty of *Sabellianism*: or if they should be thought so still, the *Athanasian Creed* may be proved to be as compleat and artificial a *Scheme of Sabellianism* as the *Considerations*. Which is a Task that ought to be undertaken by one who is resolv'd to find *Sabellianism* in every Account of the Trinity, where he can't find Three Infinite Minds; for fear all *Sabellians*, when they are closely pursu'd, should fly to this Creed, and find such
a *safe Retreat* there, as I in vain sought
p. 101. for in an *Obscure and Confus'd Knowledge*.

But

But however I am driven from that Stronghold, and however incapable I may be rendred of defending any *particular Passages* and *Expressions* in the *Considerations*, I am still persuaded it may be made very manifest that 'tis no *Sabellian* Account of a Trinity I have given there, from the *whole Design* of the Book, and the *several Proofs* insisted upon in it. For what need was there of distinguishing betwixt *General abstracted*, and *Particular determinate Conceptions*? betwixt what we are able to conceive, and what we are required to believe of the Trinity? What occasion had I to prove that there are no Words or Expressions whatsoever, that can contribute any thing towards *Explaining* our Faith in this Doctrine? And to what purpose should I take pains to Vindicate what we believe from the *Objections* of *Mystery* and *Contradiction*, by shewing, that we ought to believe *Mysteries*, and that there is no *Contradiction* implied in our Faith? To what End and Purpose, I say, was all this, if I took the *Three Persons in the Godhead* to be nothing else but *Three Names*, *Characters*, or *Relations* of *One God*; which is such an easie conceivable Notion, as I was sure every body understood, and was liable to none of those Difficulties I was labouring to remove? This would have been a very absurd ridiculous Enterprize if it had been done, and as hard to be accounted for, as the Dean's Sagacity now is in finding out what was so very unlikely to be intended. Thus

30 *A Defence of some Considerations*

Thus have I freed *my Words* as well as *my Self* from the guilt of any *Sabellian* Meaning, as far as I am a capable Judge of what was meant by them; But, because I may be suspected of Partiality in the Case, I appeal to the Judgment of all that ever read the *Considerations*, whether there be any *Sabellian Notions, Scenes, or Conclusions* in them: And I think I may safely put my Cause upon their Verdict, because I was so long a concealed Author as to have the opportunity of knowing what Opinion a great many Persons of Character had of that Discourse; and several of them were such, whose skill in the Controversie of the Trinity, and zeal for the Doctrine and Catholick Exposition of it, must be allowed by the Dean as well as the rest of the World; and I do solemnly protest to him,

*Distinct.
between
Re. and
Nom.
Trin. Ex.
p. 22.*

that, till he tax'd me with *Sabellianism* in a former Pamphlet, I never heard of any Person whatsoever that laid any such thing to my Charge. And I can hardly persuade my self the

Dean was the most unprejudiced Reader of the *Considerations* of any that ever gave themselves the trouble of looking into them; nay, he must excuse me if I believe he

Examined the Book with a strong tincture of Prejudice against it, and gave a hasty Sentence for want of *Patience* to proceed any further in the Cause than

*Pres. Stat.
p. 123.*

than he was willing to have it go; and 'tis the *civilest* thing I can believe, because I should be tempted to have a very strange Opinion of any Man's Judgment that thought so contrary to every body else in such a plain Matter as this is, without some secret Byass to incline him to be Singular.

But allowing the Dean's Prejudices to run never so high, 'twas a little too severe, methinks, to pass a peremptory Censure upon me for *Heresie*, because he knew there lay no appeal from his Sentence, tho' every body else were willing to acquit me of it: Had some University made a *Decree* against me, I might have got that easily revers'd by a contrary Judgment of a Doctor of greater Authority; But when Dr. Sherlock affirms, *'Tis Heresie not to say Three Infinite Minds and Spirits*, all the Fathers of the Catholick Church cannot secure me for adhering still to this ancient Form of *Three Persons*. But I must bear my Misfortune as well as I can, and, since this is the only way of Defence I have left me; I will proceed to examine the remaining parts of his Charge against me.

*Vindic.
p. 66.*

III. Thirdly, I shall endeavour to Vindicate the Design of the *Considerations*, and shew what Reason I had for not insisting upon *Tradition* and the Authority of the *Fathers*.

Now the Design of the *Considerations* was in short this: To Prove the *Doctrine of the Trinity*

32 *A Defence of some Considerations*

nity in such a manner as I thought might equally secure the True *Catholick Faith* against the false Opinions of all sorts of *Hereticks* that oppose it, and the improper Expositions of all such as undertake to *Explain* it.

In order to this end, I judged it the best Method to consult *Scripture* first, and from thence, in Answer to the *Socinians* and *Arians*, to shew, that the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* are truly *God*, the same *God* with the *Father*, by all the Characters of the One only *God* being there applied to them; And from the several Marks and Expressions of Distinction found in the *Language of Scripture* to prove against the *Sabellians*, that *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghost* are not meer Names, or signifie only different Offices, Relations, Attributes, or Parts of the Deity, but some *Eternal Distinction* different from all these: But the manner of *God's* being *Three* being nowhere determined in *Holy Writ*, nor any other Terms besides those of *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghost*, made use of there to signifie it, I thought it proper, against all pretenders to plain and intelligible *Explications* of this Wonderful *Distinction* in the *Divine Nature*, to evince from *Reason*, that it is not conceivable by Human Understanding in this Life, nor expressible by any Language we have or can invent; It seem'd also to me very expedient that it should in the same manner be made to appear, that there can be no *Absurdity* or *Contradiction*

tradition in the Catholick Faith of the Trinity, as expressed by our Church; that so, these Objections being remov'd, I might effectually urge against those that blame us for requiring the belief of a *Mystery*, that 'tis very agreeable to our Reason, to believe what's as plainly revealed by God, as this Doctrine is, notwithstanding we are not able to comprehend it.

This was the End I propos'd to my self in the *Considerations*, and these were the Means I lookt upon as the likeliest to effect it; tho I have cast my Thoughts into another Method in Writing than what I ranged them in before I writ; because I did not believe the same way I took to satisfy my self so proper for the conviction of others. For I never had seen any Argument that gave me occasion to distrust the *Catholick Opinion*, but only I thought my self oblig'd to be so *impartial* (whatever dislike the Dean may have to *impartiality*) as to examine carefully, whether I had good reason to believe what I had hitherto believed, without such strict Examination; and this being my case, I was at liberty to follow the natural course of my Subject, in *considering for my self*: But the different Prejudices of those that had embrac'd contrary Opinions, and the appearances of Truth and Reason they were founded upon, requir'd a different method of Application in any one that undertook to encounter

p. 57.

34 *A Defence of some Considerations*

ter them; and a Man could not search this Point thoroughly, without perceiving what it was that other People chiefly stuck at; and therefore the *Considerations* were contrived in such a manner, as appear'd, at the time when they were writ, the most proper to make the Belief of the Trinity easie to *others*; by removing all the principal Difficulties supposed to obstruct it, by those that either denied or doubted of that Doctrine, or were perplexed in their Faith about it.

The Reasons why I did not insist upon *Tradition*, and the Authority of the *Fathers*, were these;

First. I did not imagine, that if a thing was well proved any one way, there could be much real need of a further Proof. Though *Scripture* and *Authority* are two agreeing *Witnesses*, as the Dean calls them, yet I could not apprehend, that when *one Witness* was acknowledged sufficient to prove the Point, the Cause could suffer by not calling in a *second*. There's nothing so common in the Controversies of Religion, as for different Men, according to their different Talents and Studies, to take different Methods of opposing or defending the same Doctrine; and I never before heard it objected to any of them, that he did not fight his Adversary at all Weapons. The *Doctrine* of *Transubstantiation* has been proved by
some

some to be absurd and false, from Principles of *Sense* and *Reason* only: others have exposed the Falshood of it, by Arguments taken purely from *Scripture*; and the same Opinion has been shewn to be erroneous and Heretical, from the concurrent Testimony of the *Catholic Fathers*, without the former helps. And why may not the same Method be used in defence of the *Trinity*, as is allowed in the confutation of the corporal Presence? especially since the Adversaries of the *Trinity* have blasphemously loaded this Doctrine with the same Absurdities as *Transubstantiation* is justly chargeable with.

But besides that *Scripture* and *Reason* together are sufficient to make good the Doctrine of the *Trinity* against all that oppose it, there are a great many we have to deal with upon this Subject, that will not be argued with upon any other Heads. For the *Socinians* (as the Dean rightly observes of them) p. 77. reject the Doctrine of the *Fathers*, and the *Catholic Tradition* of the Faith from the *Apostolick Age*, and yet appeal to *Scripture* and *natural Sentiments*: and how could these Men be apply'd to more properly, than by shewing that *Scripture* and *natural Sentiments* are against them? Some there are (as particularly, the Author of the *Answer to Dr. Bull's Judgment of the Fathers*) who pretend that *Tradition* is of the side of the *Arrians* and

34 *A Defence of some Considerations*

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P. 77.

36 *A Defence of some Considerations*

Unitarians; only that our *Fathers* happened to get the better of *theirs*, and so by that means their Books were preserved, and what these Men esteem the *true Orthodox Writings* were lost. Now, tho this be an impudent pretence, and may no doubt be proved to be so, by such an exact Master of Ecclesiastical Antiquity as Dr. *Bull*; yet it seems to me much easier, to convince such Men as these from *Scripture* and *Reason*, which are allowed to be the same on both sides, than from *Authority*, when They and We are not agreed upon the same *Fathers*.

Another Reason, and that which principally determin'd me not to consult the *Fathers* upon this Point was, because, when I was satisfied from the *Scripture* and *Church Account* of this Article, that *God was One and Three* in such a manner as my Reason told me was inconceivable, I thought it in vain to search the *Fathers*, in order to know what Terms they had made use of to express what was not to be expressed more clearly in any: besides I

P. 259. was so far of the Dean's mind, as to be convinced it required great care and application to find out the *unanimous Sense of the Fathers* upon this Doctrine; that it was necessary to distinguish betwixt their *Faith* and *Philosophy*; and that their Faith when thus distinguished was plain and simple, and just such as we find it now in the *Scriptures*. I
knew

knew very well, that the *Fathers* were extremely cautious of departing from the Language of Scripture, and that when they did change their way of speaking, it fell out (as the Dean has observed) that the *unscriptural Terms* they were forced to use against the *Hereticks*, by degrees improved into great subtilties, and disturbed the Church with very nice wrangling Disputes: For which reasons I hoped I might be excused, if I took a shorter and easier way of proving the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, than by undertaking to vindicate the *Fathers and Schools* from those *Obscurities, Inconsistencies, and Contradictions*, which, the Dean says, are generally charged on them; and to rectifie all the *Improprieties of the Philosophical Terms* used by the *Fathers*, which the wisest Men, as he tells us, have owned in them, when applied to this sacred Mystery.

These were the Grounds I went upon, in not insisting upon a *Traditionary Proof* of the *Doctrine of the Trinity*; and I hope no sober unprejudiced Person will be offended with me for taking the shortest, most effectual, and most unquestionable way of convincing my self and others, of what was necessary to be believed upon this Subject: nor suppose that I do not think the *Fathers* very good Guides in Religious Controversies, because in this Point I was fully persuaded I

38 *A Defence of some Considerations*

had found my way without them; and I was sure that the greatest part of those that err'd in wrong Paths, would not accept of their direction, tho never so clear and express.

Had the *Scripture* seemed to me to contradict the common Faith of the *Church of England*, as it is now expressed in our Publick Offices of our Religion, I should then have thought my self obliged to consult *Authority* in the matter; and should have paid as great a deference as any Man was willing or able to do, to the unanimous consent of the first and most antient *Catholick Writers*: but having no such temptation to examine them upon this Head, nor having any *New Terms, Notions* or *Expositions*, that wanted their Patronage to reconcile them to *Scripture*, and the *general received Professions of Faith*; I was content with shewing, that what I found in *Scripture* concerning the *Trinity*, was exactly agreeable to what the *Church* requires us now to believe of that Doctrine; and that this *Form of sound words* founded upon *Scripture*, was consistent with all the Principles of our *Reason*; and consequently upon all these accounts was a proper Object of our Faith.

This is what I thought my self concerned to offer, for the publick Justification of my self and my Design, with respect to the *Considerations*; and having, as I am perswaded, said what is sufficient to satisfy others, that my

my Intentions in writing about the *Trinity* were very good; however the Performance might fall short of them; and that I have all that Respect for the *Fathers* which their Learned and Pious Works justly challenge from us, and which the *Church of England* requires to be paid them: I shall Address my self afresh to the Dean, and shew him, that as much as he thinks fit to Blame and Condemn me, I have gone upon the *same Design* in the *Considerations*, which he acknowledges to be the best I could go upon, in a Discourse of the *Trinity*; I have observed the *same Measures* he recommends; I am more concerned for *Mysteries*, rely less upon my natural Reason, and have a greater regard for the *Fathers* than even the Dean himself.

Now that the best way of Managing the Controversie of the *Trinity* is not to Explain or Expound it, nor to enter into the Philosophical Disputes of *Fathers* and *Schoolmen*, but to keep close to *Scripture*, and use no new Terms, is manifest from the First Chapter of the Dean's last Book; where he assures us, that the Faith concerning the *Trinity* is plain and cer-
tain, all of it that is necessary to the Purposes of Religion; and that the best way to settle this Controversie upon its true ancient bottom, is to distinguish what is Fundamental from all Metaphysical Speculations; That the Form of Baptism is the Rule and Standard of our Faith in this Point, and was

P. 3.

40 A Defence of some Considerations

always appealed to as such by the Catholick Fathers ;

p. 5. That the Names and Characters of Father

p. 6. and Son are better understood, liable to less

Disputes, and convey to our Minds a more distinct Conception of God the Father and his Eternal Son, than any other artificial Terms ; and that

p. 4. therefore we ought not to engage in Philosophical Disputes which we know little or nothing of, and which the Scripture takes no notice

p. 6. of ; but we should reduce the Controversie as much as possibly we can to Scripture Terms ; because Artificial and Metaphysical Terms divide even the professors of the Catholick Faith, and give too just occasion to the vain Boasts and Triumphs of Hereticks.

He has a great deal more to the same purpose in this Chapter, in order to shew

p. 7. the absolute necessity there is at present to take this Controversie of the Trinity out of Terms of Art, that our Adversaries may see that our Controversie with them is not concerned in these Disputes : Which seems to me to be a full and perfect Confutation of what he has said against my Account of the Trinity, in his Second Chapter ; and for Defence of his own, in all the rest of his Book : For that which he here advises is what I propos'd to my self in the Considerations ; and the whole drift of his present Book is to justify his taking a contrary Method to this in the Former.

Since

Since therefore I have endeavoured to manage the Controversie of the *Trinity*, in the manner the Dean is pleased to approve and recommend to others, tho' it was not so proper perhaps for him himself to be confined to the Rules he gave; I cannot see any reason for his charging me, as by plain Suggestions he often does, with *decrying Mysteries*, *preferring my Natural Reason to Scripture*, and *despising the Authority of the Fathers*.

To tax me with *Decrying Mysteries*, is to put me in the lowest Rank of all the pretenders either to *Knowledge* or *Religion*. There's nothing in which a Man can demonstrate his Ignorance of himself, and the whole System of things, more than by saying there are *no Mysteries in Nature*; and there cannot be a more absurd way of denying *God and Revelation*, than by maintaining there are *no Mysteries in Revelation and the Scriptures*. I have not, I am confident, rendred my self obnoxious to such an Imputation as this, by any thing I have said with relation to *Mysteries* in my Discourse of the *Trinity*: For, what I chiefly contended for there, was, that the *Trinity* was a *Mystery* not conceivable by any Notions our Minds were able to frame, and consequently not capable of being rendred plainer than the Scripture Language made it, by any other Terms, tho' never so wisely chosen: From whence it manifestly

42 *A Defence of some Considerations*

manifestly appears, that I think the *Doctrine of the Trinity* more a *Mystery* than the Dean does; for he owns in the Preface to his First *Vindication of this Doctrine*, that he has gotten clear and more distinct Notions of this great Mystery since the writing of that Book than he had before; whereas I solemnly declare that I have not, after the reading his Book, and writing my own, any clearer or more distinct Notions of the Trinity, than reading the Scripture had before given me.

If therefore I allow that there are *Mysteries in Scripture*, and that the *Mysteries* we find there ought to be believed, and cannot be explained, as 'tis evident I do; what Ground has the Dean to charge me with preferring my Reason and *Natural Sentiments* to Scripture? I have not that confidence in my own Reason as he imagines I have: I do not think any
 p. 77. more than he does, that Scripture is always to be Expounded by our *Natural Sentiments*; or that a *Trinity* can be proved by *Natural Reason*. And I am as sensible as the Dean pretends to be, that I know nothing of such
 p. 313. a *Distinction and Unity of Substance in the Deity* as can help us to form any Notion of a *Trinity in Unity*, and defend it from the Charge of *Contradiction and Impossibility* when we have done.
 From his own Experience he tells us,
 p. 328. that when we reduce our Thoughts of the *Trinity* into Terms of Art, we find our Minds
 confoun-

confounded and perplex'd, and unable to form any distinct and easie Ideas. Nay, let us turn over our Minds as long as we please, and change Words and Phrases, we can find no Ideas to answer any Words of this nature: And just so it is with me upon this Occasion; Whatever Terms I make use of to express the Trinity in, I am still as far from comprehending it as I was before. P. 330.

But tho' our Experience be the same, our Conduct I perceive is different: For the Dean undertakes to give us a very intelligible Account of a Trinity in Unity, and it seems to him that he has performed it; that he has shewn us a Natural demonstration of a Trinity, and made the Generation of the Word, Whole of Whole, very conceivable; So that, upon the Conclusion of the Matter, he is persuaded, that, by vertue of his largely Explaining his Idea of a Trinity in Unity, we have got an Idea of it too, that very Idea which he has explained: viz. One Absolute Divinity, with Two Eternal, Essential Processions in the Unity and Identity of Nature: The Essential Father, Self-originated Mind, with his Eternal Word, his Eternal Son, and the Eternal Spirit of Father and Son. And now he thinks he has thoroughly and effectually done what he pretended to in his First Vindication; and made his Account of the Trinity as Plain and Intelligible P. 259. P. 357. P. 331. P. 387. Vindic. p. 68.

44 *A Defence of some Considerations*

as the Notion of One God, or of One Person in the Godhead. And he seems to have relyed very much upon his own Natural Sentiments in all his Performance; For he will allow no other Account of the Trinity but this to be True; because that is the only Account
p. 375. of the Matter he can understand. 'Tis plain the Three Persons of the Trinity must be Three Infinite Minds and Spirits, be-
p. 330. cause it is impossible for him to form any other Notion of it. If you talk of Modes of Subsistence that will never Explain the
p. 348. Matter, because he never could Understand it; it is beyond his Philosophy: Except we take his Account of the Doctrine of Relations, 'tis impossible rightly to understand what the Schools, or any body else, teach about a Trinity in Unity: We must allow his Natural Demon-
p. 320. stration of the Inseparable Union of Father and Son, by an inseparable conscious Life and Sensation, because there is no other Notion possible that we can form of the Mutual In-Being of Father and Son: If we
p. 326. would have a sensible Notion of a Trinity in Unity, 'tis absolutely necessary to consult his Doctrine of Relations. And lest such an Intelligible Notion of a Trinity and Unity, as he has given us, should not be entertain'd for want of sufficient Authority from Scripture for it, Scripture must be Expounded to it; For that most certainly is a Self-evident Proposition, that
Scripture

Scripture cannot contradict a natural Demonstration and sensible Notion of a Trinity. *He, I, and another*, which are applied to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in Scripture, must signifie Three as real distinct Persons when so applied there as these words signifie in common Speech; For, if we don't allow this, then he who speaks, and he to whom he speaks, and he who is spoken of, must be one and the same Person, which would be such perverseness and deceit as does not become God: And Three in the Godhead, who are as real distinct Persons as these words, *I, He, and another* can make Three to be in common speech, are, and must be, by the Dean's Hypothesis, *Three Infinite Minds, Spirits, &c.* From which Argument it is manifest, that the Dean's *Nations, Ideas, and Explications* of a Trinity in Union, must be Intelligible and Orthodox, and no other, or else we must be forced to charge God Almighty with such things as it is not fit to repeat.

This is the Dean's way of Managing the Controversie of the Trinity: But for my part, notwithstanding all the pains he has been at to enlighten me, I cannot yet form any sensible Notion, or be led into a natural belief of a Trinity in Unity. Tho' I agree with him in all his former Experiences, I have not the same feeling he has of a Mind, Word, and Spirit; and therefore I have not yet been taught by the natural Notion and Idea

p. 358.

ibid.

Idea

46 A Defence of some Considerations

p. 359. *Idea of a Mind*, nor does my natural Reason strongly infer, that there is such a Distinction in the Trinity, as that signified by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Eternal Mind, Word, and Spirit. And being very well content with this my Ignorance, I don't think it proper to make any other use of my natural Sentiments upon the Subject of the Trinity; but to save my self and others the fruitless and uneasie trouble of looking further than we can see, by proving as evidently as I can, that no more is to be conceived of this Mystery than what is in Scripture plainly revealed to us; and that, if God thinks fit to reveal

p. 387. such things to us as we have no Ideas of, we are concerned and obliged to believe them; as the Dean urges in the same Page, where

ibid. he says, *We have an Idea of Trinity in Unity*: I do not pretend to be sure from Principles of natural Reason, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost must be Three Infinite Minds, because they are distinguished in Scripture by Personal Pronouns in the same manner

p. 18. as Three Men are, as the Dean argues;

p. 129. Forasmuch as it is possible that the Personal Pronouns used in Scripture may be applied to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in some other Sense than that of Three Infinite Minds, without our charging God foolishly: This, I say, seems very possible to me, because Father, Son, and

and *Holy Ghost* are not, (as the Dean himself allows) *Three Persons as Three* P. 253.
Men are Three Persons, and Three and P. 252.
One in God do not signifie what they do in Crea-
tures: I durst not rely thus far upon my *natu-*
ral Sentiments when I writ the *Considerations*;
 and I am under the same Caution and Reserve
 now: for I am more fully convinced
 than ever I was, that what the Dean P. 58.
 asserts is very true; that *Natural Reason is a*
very bad and a very dangerous Expofitor of Scrp-
ture in Supernatural Mysteries, and neither has
any Authority nor gives any Light in these Mat-
ters.

Now the Case being thus as I have repre-
 sented it, I think I may take upon me to say,
 that the Dean has no good Ground to accuse
 me of placing too much Trust in my own
Natural Sentiments, and not giving a due Pre-
 ference to *Scripture*. And a few of the like
 Remarks will serve to make it appear, that my
 Regard for the *Fathers* was such as he could
 not possibly find fault with.

For, if there is not one of all the *Natu-*
ral Representations which are made by the P. 235.
Catholick Fathers of the Trinity, but what Lite-
rally and Philosophically applied, would furnish
out some new Herefie; if that Great Man
S. Austin sometimes miss'd the true Notion P. 201.
after he had happily started it; and the other
 Fathers

48 *A Defence of some Considerations*

Fathers may be presum'd liable to the same Deviations; if there can be no other Catholick Sense made of what the Fathers so universally reach, that there is in the Trinity una Substantia, but not unus Subsistens, but only that which the Dean gives us: if, I say, Matters stand thus with the Fathers, as the Dean assures us they do; and 'tis plain, that never any body before him expounded the Catholick Doctrine of the Trinity as he has done; what reason could he possibly have to blame me, for not searching the Fathers for a true Notion of a Trinity, when he knew very well what danger there was of being mistaken, without his particular guidance?

And indeed his assistance in understanding the Fathers was absolutely necessary, to enable me to form a true Catholick Notion of the Trinity from their Writings, and to speak intelligibly about it: for had I ventured alone, without such a Guide, and found, as I perceive by him I must, that the Fathers were cautious in calling the Three Divine Persons, Three Natures, or Essences, or Substances, I should hardly have undertook to prove, that what they called a Divine Person, is, notwithstanding their being cautious of saying it, the Divine Essence, Nature and Substance, and nothing else, and that they certainly meant so. But, had I never in all my reading met with any such

such Expressions used by the *Fathers* as *Three Minds*, or *Three Spirits*, distinguished by *Three Self-consciousnesses*, and inseparably united in *One Mind* by *Mutual-consciousness*, I could never have prevailed with my self to have started these new Terms upon a Subject that I was sure could receive no further light by them, when they might probably furnish out some new *Heretic* to such as would be apt to apply them. Literally and Philosophically; much less should I have called in the *Fathers* to witness that they must mean thus, tho' they industriously avoiding speaking so, for such Reasons as ought to have weighed with Me, as much as with Them. Neither should I have called the Catholick Form of *One Substance* and *Three Hypostases*, a
Secondary Notion of a Trinity in Unity, p. 331.
 which we can form no distinct Idea of; and this, in order to substitute my own new Account of the Doctrine, as an intelligible
Notion of a Trinity in Unity; not like *ibid.*
 the other, which was made only to se- *ibid.*
 cure the Catholick Faith against the Sabellian and Arian Heretic, but such as would let us into the whole Secret of the Mystery it self.

Nay further, I have such a Veneration for Catholick and Apostolick Tradition; that I do not only think it safe and reasonable to Expound
Scripture as the Catholick Faith and Ca- p. 49.
tholick Fathers Expound it; when the words of
 D *Scripture*

50 *A Defence of some Considerations*

Scripture will naturally and easily admit that sense, which is all the Deference I can find that the Dean advises to be paid them; But, if some Passages of *Scripture* did not now seem to me to bear that *Traditionary Explication* of them which had constantly and universally prevailed from the Apostles days, I should, notwithstanding, think my self obliged to acquiesce in it, without it manifestly appeared to *contradict* the plain Words and Design of *Scripture*; and I should be very distrustful of my Judgment of a Contradiction upon such an Occasion. And therefore the Dean has no cause at all to charge me with rejecting a *Traditionary Faith*, and venturing to *Ex-*
 P. 55. *pound Scripture by my natural Sentiments*; when I am fully persuaded, and perhaps more than the Dean is, that *this is a very unsafe Rule in Matters of pure Revelation, of which meer natural Reason is no competent judge.*

Thus have I Answered all the Articles of the Dean's Charge against me; and the greater I find it to be, the more I am at a loss to know what Provocation it was grounded upon.

When the Dean's First *Vindication of the Trinity* came out, I read it over with all the willingness to like it that a long respect for several of his other Writings had given me; but afterwards, when I set to consider that Subject more closely my self, I found my self obliged

bliged to differ from him in his manner of Treating that Argument; and I could not help being sensible of the great Inconveniences it was liable to, before any body had exposed them to publick view; so that I was not led, but only confirmed in my Judgment by those *very Learned and Rational* Answers that were made to the Dean's Book. In the *Considerations* which were writ before, and published afterwards, for the Reasons mentioned in the Preface to them, I had no thoughts either of *espousing, or finding fault with any particular Man's Notions*: 'Twas Truth, and Information only I sought after; and therefore my Reflections were all *General*, and aimed at *Things*, not *Persons*. If my Notions differ'd from the Dean's, or fell in with other Mens, 'twas more than I could help, and more than I foresaw when I began to write. I was very sorry it so happened, that his Notions were not the same with mine; and I was glad to find that mine agreed with those of so many other great Men as have appeared since upon the same Subject. And as for any other *private Design* or *Motive* of writing the *Considerations*, I am not in the least conscious to my self of it. Since therefore the Dean's Quarrel to me seems to have no other Foundation but my being of different Sentiments from him, and presuming to propose them to the World when I knew them to be so; I think it very requi-

52 *A Defence of some Considerations*

site to say something by way of Excuse for my supposed Presumption in this Matter.

IV. Fourthly and Lastly then I shall offer some Reasons why I think the Dean's way of *Managing the Controversie of the Trinity* is not the most Expedient.

I do not here intend to enter into the Controversie again, and shew how dangerous and ill-grounded an *Hypothesis* the Dean's is, by examining all the Parts and Consequences of it; this has been *unanswerably* done already by a *better Hand*, with all the *Justness* and *force of Reasoning* imaginable. My business is only to Defend my self; and therefore I shall move no further, in a Matter, I think Ill begun by the Dean at first, and now unwarrantably pursued, than to give him some short Account why I think so.

In the First place then I cannot judge it Expedient to use so many *New Terms* as the Dean does to *Explain the Trinity*, when it cannot be rendred clearer to us by any of them than it was made before by the *Established Forms* of Expression.

In his former Discourses upon the *Trinity* he calls the *Three Persons* in the Godhead *Three Minds, Three Spirits, Three Substances, Essences, and Natures*; to these Expressions he adds in
his

his Last Book, * *Three Selves, Three Is's,*
 || *Three Singulars, † Three Sames, Three* p. 21.
Wholes, One Absolute Divinity, with p. 29.
Two Internal Processions, &c. p. 32. The U-
 nity of the *Three Persons* is represent- 373.
 ed sometimes as a *Specifick Sameness and Uni-* 174.
ty; sometimes as a *Natural and Essen-*
tial Unity, whereby a *Common Nature* 183.
 is *One in Truth and Reality, not in Notion only,*
 as a *Species is*; which *Natural Unity* is said
 afterwards to be a *Numerical Unity*, ibid.
 and is *One in Number*, but does not
 signify a *Singular Nature* as it does in *Creatures*.
 In another place, the *Unity of the Di-* 195.
vine Nature is neither a *Unity of Sin-*
gularity, nor a *Specifick Unity of Nature*, but
 bears some resemblance and analogy to both; and
 presently after he affirms, that all the
 names of a *Specifick Sameness and Unity* 197.
 do in a more perfect and excellent manner belong
 to the *Sameness and Unity of the Divine Nature,*
subsisting in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, than
 to the *Sameness of the Human Nature*, as *Peter,*
James, and John. And several other such like
 Accounts has the Dean given us of the *Unity*
 of *God*, and the *Distinctions of the Persons in*
 the *Godhead.* But, since 'tis evident to any Man
 that tries his *Faculties* this way, that none of
 all these Expressions advance his knowledge
 of the *Trinity* one step further than the *Scripture-*
Language of One God, who is Father, Son,

54 *A Defence of some Considerations*

and *Holy Ghost*, or the *Ecclesiastical Form* of *One Divine Nature* and *Three Persons* had carried it, to what purpose is it to amuse and perplex us with new uninstruative Sounds?

When the Dean freely acknowledges,
 P 371. that the *Three Persons* in the *Godhead* cannot properly be called *Three Infinite Minds* and

Spirits; and he thinks those *Terms* of
 112. *Three Substances* and *Three Minds* may with good reason be let alone; why are they insisted upon again, and *New Books*, as well as *New Terms*, multiplied for their Justification? It

is by his own confession, very difficult
 198. what *Three* to call *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, so as to avoid the *Herestes* of both *Ex-*

traams: We have nothing, he tells us,
 P. 9. in *Natura* like this, and therefore we know not by what *Names* to call it. Those who

have most critically examined the *Force* of
 ibid. *Words*, find them all, upon some occasion or other, *defectivus* or *improper* for this purpose.

This he is very sensible of, and therefore professes,
 P. 11. 'That he can see no

' necessity why we must find out a common
 ' Name for the *Three* in the blessed *Trinity*,
 ' when the *Scripture* has given us no common
 ' Name for them; much less why we should
 ' dispute eternally about the *Propriety* and
 ' Use of such *Words*, to hazard the *Catholick*
 ' Faith, at least the *Honour* and *Reputation*
 ' of it, together with the *Peace* of the *Church*.

' If

‘ If I am asked (says he) not only who, but
 ‘ what the Three in the Ever-blessed Trinity
 ‘ are? I know no better Answer to make than
 ‘ what the Scripture has taught me, that they
 ‘ are *God the Father, God the Son, and God the*
 ‘ *Holy Ghost*; which signifie all that can be ex-
 ‘ pressed by any Artificial and Unscriptural
 ‘ Words; is an Answer liable to no Exceptions
 ‘ or Misrepresentations, and in which all must
 ‘ agree who believe a Trinity; and it shames
 ‘ and silences all those Disputes which are of-
 ‘ ten occasioned by other Words, tho’ never
 ‘ so wisely and reasonably chosen.

And this is my very Reason why I could
 never approve of the Expediency of the Dean’s
 way of *Vindicating and Explaining the Doctrine*
of the Trinity; which I am not able to express
 more fully than he has done.

But, besides that all the *New Terms* and
 Forms of Expression used by the Dean convey
 no *New Ideas* to us, nor carry our Knowledge
 of the *Trinity* any further than the *Scripture-*
Language and the *Ecclesiastical Terms* now in
 use do; as the Dean has, in sundry places of
 his Book very satisfactorily made out: Be-
 sides this, I say, the Inexpediency of the Dean’s
 Method of *Vindicating the Doctrine of the Tri-*
nity seems very plain to me upon another Ac-
 count; and that is, Because the Defence of
 the *New Terms* he had started engages him

56 *A Defence of some Considerations*

in a great many Philosophical Niceties, and Distinctions, that are very liable to a wrong Construction, and administer occasion to Hereticks and Profane Men to expose the Doctrine of the Trinity, and to weak Christians to doubt of it; As will easily appear by a few Instances.

The Thing which the Dean asserted and endeavoured to prove in his First *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity* was, That *the Three Persons in the Trinity are as Distinct as Three Men are.* This put him upon using those Phrases of *Three Minds, Spirits, &c.* then; and this has since put him upon looking out for several ways of Reconciling such a *Distinction* as this with the *Unity of God.* Particularly in his Last Book he thinks he has solved the Matter by shewing, that the Three Divine Persons are *inseparably United*: But this Argument does not seem to me to have Force enough to defend his Notion of a Trinity from the Charge of *Tritheism.* For if *Three compleat individual Minds* which are closely and intimately *United by God*, and may be supposed to be for ever so United, are, as the Dean allows, as much *Three compleat individual Minds* still, as they were before they were thus United, every body will not be able to see, why *Three Infinite Minds inseparably United*, may not be as much *Three compleat individual Minds*, as *Three Finite Minds*,

Minds, separably United are. If the Union be as close and intimate in the one Case as in the other, (as there is nothing alledged in this Argument to the contrary) it will not be easie to perceive how the Manner, or Duration of the Union should alter any thing in the Distinction. But *Three Divine Natures, tho' specifically and perfectly alike,* the Dean owns, ^{p. 204.} would unavoidably be *Three Gods*; And I think 'tis very plain, that if *Three Divine Natures* could possibly be, or be conceived, we must consider them as *Naturally, Essentially, and Inseparably United*; and therefore I am not satisfied that such an *inseparable Union of Three Infinite Minds* is sufficient to prove them not to be *Three Gods*.

And as the Dean's Notion of an *Inseparable Union* does not come up to the Proof he intended it for, so neither are his Distinctions of *Absolute, Personal, and Relative*, which run through all his Defences, sufficient to justify his Doctrine from the Imputation he wards against.

For if he does mean *Three Minds, Spirits, Substances, Natures, and Essences* in a *Personal* and not an *Absolute Sense*, as he often tells us he does, yet he takes care at other times to let us know, that *Person is not a Relative Term*; That a *Person, as a Person, is Essence and Substance*; That a *Divine Person is the Divine Essence, Substance*

p. 19.
264.
272.
273.

and

58 A Defence of some Considerations

and *Nature*, and *nothing else*; And if he tells us
 p. 16. withal, that *the Father, Son, and Holy
 Ghost* are each of them *Essence, Substance,
 Subsistence*, in the most perfect and absolute Sense
 of these Terms: Any Man that lays all these
 things together, will be apt to conclude, that
 Three *Personal* Minds, Natures, Substances, &c.
 mean as much as Three *Absolute* Minds, Na-
 tures, Substances, &c. do.

So in like manner, tho' he should call the
 Three Persons in the Godhead Three *Relative*
 Minds or Substances; or, if that should
 379. not be so proper, One *Absolute Sub-
 stance* and Two *Relative Substances*; Yet if this
 be only an *Arbitrary Distinction*, and he does not
 know any difference between Three Sub-
 378. stances and Three *Relative Substances*
 himself, as he plainly intimates; what advan-
 tage will it be to his whole Account of the Mat-
 ter to resolve it into the distinction be-
 379. tween *Absolute* and *Relative*, which he
 &c. lays so much stress upon?

A great many other Passages there are
 throughout the Dean's Last Book, which are
 very liable to *Heretical Senses*; But, my
 p. 115. business being only to *Defend* and not
Answer, I chuse to say no more than will just
 vindicate me for departing from the Dean's
 way of writing concerning the Trinity: Nor
 would I be thought to infer from what I have
 been forced to say, that the Dean really in-
 tended

tended or designed to establish *Tritheism* or any other *Hereſie*: all my Opinion in the Caſe is, That a New Hypotheſis offering it ſelf to his Thoughts, the Satisfaction that immediately flowed in upon him, might probably hinder him from ſeeing to the End of it; and ſo it was propoſed without any apprehenſion of the Conſequences it was attended with: Afterwards, an eager deſire of maintaining the Invention produced us abundance of new and ſtrange Philoſophy, and a great many different Methods of improper Speaking; which was perfectly unavoidable upon a Subject where no Philoſophy was uſeful, or any change of Language proper. I take the liberty to call the Dean's Hypotheſis his *Invention*, becauſe I thought it ſo at firſt, and his great fondneſs for it ſince has confirmed me in my Opinion. I know there are ſome who believe his Notions concerning *Self-conſciouſneſs* and *Mutual-conſciouſneſs*, &c. might have been taken out of *A Moral Eſſay concerning the Soul of Man*, written originally in *French*; becauſe the Author of that Diſcourſe has the ſame way of *Diſtinguiſhing* and *Uniting Minds* as the Dean has; But then he makes *Two Minds United by Mutual-conſciouſneſs* to be but *One Perſon*, which ſeems to overthrow the Dean's whole Hypotheſis, and conſequently to acquit him from borrowing it from thence. But whether the Dean had his Notions from this, or any other Author, or
not,

60 *A Defence of some Considerations*

not, I am not in the least concerned to know, nor should have told him of it, if I had certainly known who he was oblig'd to for them. Whether the Dean took a right way of Managing the Controversie of the Trinity is all that I am enquiring after; and it would not give me a better or a worse Opinion of that, to know, either that his Notions were his own, or another Man's: For whosoever they belong to, I shall always be of the same mind the Dean once was, that there *may be good Reason to let them alone.*

This I have endeavour'd to shew him was *Proper* upon Two Accounts already; and there is another *good Reason* why the Dean's attempt to Explain the Trinity *ought* to have been let alone; and that is, because it is directly contrary to the ~~Methods observed~~ by the *Catholick Church*, and by *all particular Churches* and Societies of Christians. It is very well known, how long it was before any *Unscriptural Terms* were Established in the *Catholick Church*; with what difficulty the *Nicene Fathers* were first prevail'd upon to use any; and how strictly and Religiously *all particular Churches* have stuck to those Ancient Determinations: And *His Majesty's Injunctions* are a late Instance how necessary the *Governours* of our *English Church* think it at present, that no private Persons should take the liberty of departing from the *Publick received Forms* of speaking upon such Points as the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*. Upon which

which Grounds I cannot imagine but the starting *New Terms* and Notions, and multiplying *more and newer* in defence of them, must be inconsistent with that deference we owe to *Ancient, and Present Authority*; if the Undertaking was only useless, and would not hazard the Peace of the Church, as very likely it would. And therefore I cannot approve the Dean's attempt of *Explaining the Trinity* by *New Terms of Expression*, because it seems to me wholly unsuitable to the Conduct and Design of the *Fathers and Governours* of the Catholic Church in all Ages; which was keeping as close to Scripture as they could, using but few other Terms, and those very constantly; and not for Explication, but only to secure the True Faith from False and Heretical Interpretations, and to preserve Peace among Christians. And as the Design it self, so likewise the Manner in which the Dean proposes it has not all those marks of Respect which I think are due to *Authority*: For he is not content to offer his New Scheme as a thing that might probably help to settle some weak Christians in their belief of a *Trinity*, or to Answer some Objections of a Cavelling Philosophical Adversary; but as such a *Form of Sound Doctrine*, as all Christians are at their utmost peril obliged to embrace and hold fast. It will not serve our turn to subscribe to the *Church-Terms*, or to follow the *Fathers* Account of them. To say,
That

62 A Defence of some Considerations

Vindia.
p. 66.

Pr. Scar.
p. 332.

That Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are
Three Persons, and not Three Infinite
Minds and Spirits, is Heresie and Non-
sense; As for the Father's Notion of
One Substance and Three Hypostases, there's no
Idea to be formed of it; and their reasonings
show no Catholick Sense can be made of, without
his Exposition be taken; We must
make his Account of the Trinity

p. 373.

the Rule of our Speaking, if we would fit our
Words to the Nature of Things; every
body else must grow out of conceit
with their own Philosophy; and they will see
Reason to do so, since there is no Ac-
count of the Matter to be understood

p. 388.

but his. Thus are we put under a necessity of
using the same way of Speaking he has done,
and no other Terms whatsoever, or of under-
going the censure of Heresie and Nonsense. If
a learned distinct Writer, who had been always
used to great niceness and exactness of Speech,
should be so cautious of explaining the Three
in the Godhead as to call them only

p. 73.

Three Somewhats, for want of a more
determined Name to give to what he thought
Inexplicable; He must say further, that they
are Three Minds, or else the Wit of Man can't
secure him from Sabellianism. When I came to
consider this Matter, I did not think fit to use
any Name at all for the Three in the Trinity;
for the Dean's Reason before mentioned, be-
cause

cause

cause we having nothing in Nature like this, I did not know by what Name to call it; and I was so far of his Opinion in the Matter, as to believe that there might be a demonstration, that there can be no Common Name for these Three. But for all that, because I did not say, they were Three Minds, Spirits, Substances, &c. I am made a Sabellian, tho' I expressed my self as fully as I could in a Negative manner against that Heresie: And, I confess, I do not think it proper to use any Positive Terms but what the Scripture and the Church have used; and I do not think they should be Explained any other way than Negatively.

When the Dean can get it Established in the Catholick Church, that there are Three Distinct Infinite Minds, Spirits and Substances in the Godhead, yet so as to be indivisibly and inseparably One Infinite Substance, Mind, and Spirit; that is, so as not to be Three Infinite Substances, Minds and Spirits; the Orthodoxy of the Phrase might not perhaps be scrupled, if the Impropriety of it could be dispens'd with. But since the Catholick Ecclesiastical Form of One God and Three Persons, has continued so long among us, and is still the fixt way of Speaking; since the Dean's Hypothesis was unknown to the Fathers, or cautiously avoided by them; since, after his publication of it, it has been solemnly rejected by a Great and Learned University, and none of our Learned

64 *A Defence of some Considerations*

ned Bishops and Doctors that have writ after him upon the Trinity have taken it up, but several of them have particularly expressed their dislike of it; since by his own confession it is *liable to a Tritheistick Sense*, and had better have been *let alone*; and, as he himself observes, the *Sabellian, Arian*, and other Heresies proceeded from a fear of *Plurality of Gods*; And since we are, for many weighty Reasons, *enjoyed by Authority to use no New Terms*, I will never give my self leave to express my belief of the Trinity in any words but what I find in the *Scripture* and our Publick *Ecclesiastical Terms*; and I think my self obliged to Explain them no otherwise than by a denial of all those *Heretical Opinions* which the *Catholick Church* has constantly rejected, and made use of some unscriptural Terms for no other end but to declare her rejection of: So that to any Man that asks me, what I mean by *Three Persons*? I think it sufficient to say, that I do not mean *Three Names, Offices, or Relations, Three Attributes or Parts of God*; nor *Three Infinite Minds, Spirits and Substances*; nor *One Infinite Uncreated Being, and Two Creatures*; but something else, which is neither of all these, and which I am not able to conceive or express: And I believe there is some such *inconceivable Distinction* in the Godhead, consistent with the Unity of God, and the proper Foundation of all those Marks and Expressions of Distinction applied

applied in Scripture to *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, because I am persuaded the Scripture has said so; and neither *Natural Reason*, nor *Catholick Tradition*, contradict that Sense I understand Scripture in upon this Article.

Thus have I finished the uneasy Task the Dean set me; and I think I have said no more than what was absolutely necessary to be said in my own Defence, and a great deal less than the Dean's Provocation gave me Warrant to say. I have heard much of the Unfairness Men of Controversie often treat one another with, but I never thought there could be so Remarkable an Instance of it shewn, as the Dean has very sensibly convinced me there may. When I read his Answer to the *Considerations*, I was amazed to find such Meanings and Consequences drawn from thence, as I was before an utter stranger to; and I was perfectly at a loss to determine whether I ever writ, or the Dean ever read that Discourse: But his frequent quotation of my Words having satisfied me, that I was the Man the Dean aimed at, and that he had had the *Patience* to read so much of what I had writ, as would serve some End or Purpose he had in writing himself; I cannot yet account for his way of Treating me: 'Tis hard to imagine how 'twas possible for him to misunderstand me so much

66 *A Defence of some Considerations*

as he appears to have done ; and I dare not give my self leave to believe, that taking me right, he designedly misrepresented me. But, whatever Principles the Dean went upon, I thought my self obliged not to imitate the Practise ; and therefore I have been very careful not to charge him with any Meanings, Consequences, or Designs which he disclaims ; and wherever I have used his Words, I have done it in the Sense they manifestly bear in the particular places cited, without inferring from thence, that the Dean's settled Opinion or Intention is what it appears to be there : because 'tis very certain, that in different places of his Book he seems to be of a different Judgment, and to have contrary Views. For my part, all the Reflections I allow my self to make upon the Dean's whole management of the Controversie he has been so long engaged in, are these : That he undertook the *Vindication of the Trinity* upon such an *Hypothesis* as, (by his own acknowledgment since) was liable to an *Heretical* and *Tritheistick* Construction ; That he has been very angry with those that were at some pains to convince him it was so ; That he has written two or three hundred Sheets to prove that the *Three Persons in the Trinity* must be called Three Minds, Spirits, &c. when he owns himself now that there are no Terms *better understood*, and convey to our minds more distinct Conceptions of the Three
in

in the Godhead, than *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; That, notwithstanding his being very sensible that *all Words are either defective, or improper for this purpose*; He has spent Nine Sheets in exposing me for asserting the same thing, and upon that ground declining the use of his Terms; That, for this very Reason only that I know of, he has Treated me in such a manner as would justify severer methods of return than I have taken; And that, if I had not found fault so very civilly as I did, I had probably received much *Civiler Usage* from the Dean than he has been pleased to afford me.

All this I think I have very good Reason to say; and I am sure I do the Dean no manner of injury by saying it; not only because 'tis all very true, but because I am firmly persuaded every body that has read this Controversie will make the same Judgment, without being disposed to it by what I offer.

I am very sorry I am obliged to deliver my Thoughts thus publickly; but the Dean has fallen upon me in such a manner as not to leave me the liberty of neglecting my own Defence. I am not so foolishly concerned for the reputation of Writing or Arguing well, as to undertake a Vindication of my self upon any such account; I could have been content to have received Correction for an improper or unwary way of expressing my self

68 *A Defence of some Considerations*

upon a concerning Point of Religion; And I am willing to make great allowances for a more than ordinary Zeal in a just and weighty Cause. Had I no other ground of Complaint, I should not have thought an Answer necessary: But when my Honesty and Integrity are call'd in question, 'twould be a Crime to be Silent; and not to Answer a false Charge of this nature, would be to make it True.

Now this is my Case at present: For 'tis plain to any one that reads the *Considerations*, that I do not make it my whole business there to prove, that the Sabellian Notion of the Unity of God, or of One single Person, and of Three Names, Titles, Characters, Extrinsicall Respects and Relations, is the true Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity. Was I such an open profess'd Sabellian as the Dean represents me here, he need not have taken so much pains to prove me one, and I should not be so absurd as to think my self injur'd. But that which I chiefly complain of now is, that the Dean supposes that I am a secret Sabellian; that I am not so Fair and Equal as I pretended to be; that I have used Art in palliating this Heresie; that I have some Expressions which would betray an unwary Reader to believe me Orthodox; but, that he has taken off the Disguise, and discovered the Artifice. It does not appear

pear to him that I believe one word concerning the Incarnation of God. I do indeed, he allows, say somewhat upon this Point that sounds well, but I don't speak out; so that the Result of his whole Account of the Matter is, That the Considerer, by an Artificial and Dishonest way of Writing, has managed Things in such a manner, that we have lost the Trinity and Incarnation, and must part with every thing that is peculiar and essential to Christianity, with them. By which, and a great many other Passages of the like nature, his Readers are induced to believe, that notwithstanding I profess and undertake to defend the Doctrine of the Trinity as it is profess'd now in the Church of England, and solemnly declare the sincerity of my Intentions in writing upon the Subject, yet I do not believe a word of it, but write artificially, with an express purpose and design to betray the True Catholick Faith, and introduce Sabellianism. This, I say, is the plain obvious Inference from his Words, tho' at the same time I must confess, I do not believe he really thinks so ill of me as this comes to himself; but only that he urges things so home, purely to drive me into His Hypothesis, by engaging me to avoid the scandal of being reckon'd a Sabellian.

But whatever his Aim and Intention in Writing was, which I do not take upon me peremptorily to determine, he has made it absolutely

70 *A Defence of some Considerations, &c.*

absolutely necessary for me to Justifie my self upon this Occasion; because there's no fence against the Effects of his Insinuation without it. Whether I was an open Sabellian, or downright Socinian (as the Dean sometimes calls me) I may safely leave to those that read the *Considerations* to decide; but that I was not a secret artificial Heretick, must be shewn in a *Defence*. For tho' my Words bear the same Sense whether I write again, or no; and my Readers are as good judges of that as my self; yet, as to the sincerity of my Design in using such Words, I am the only Person that know that; and therefore, if any body else questions it, and I am quiet under the Accusation, nothing that I said before would defend me from the Suspicions I should be exposed to from my present Silence.

This it was, that put me under a necessity of offering these Papers to the World: For, as I never will give any Man a just occasion to suspect my Integrity, so will I never bear any Man's unjust suspicion of it. In all other respects the Dean, or any body else, may make as free with me as they please, at the expence of their own Character: But in this tender and Important Point, I shall always take care to do my self Justice, where I have any apprehension of suffering by my not doing it; and I shall always endeavour to be Just to my self, without being wanting in my Charity to others.

F I N I S.



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ERRATA.

PAGE 8. line 7. for *receiving* read *reverencing*. l. 8. after *without* insert *our*. p. 8. l. 16. for *receiving* r. *reverencing*. p. 9. l. 12. for *the same* r. *this*. p. 10. l. 17. for *many* r. *any*. p. 11. l. 22. for *distinction* r. *definition*. p. 12. l. 1. for *as* r. *what*. p. 16. l. 14. for *person* r. *person*. p. 18. l. 18. for *terms* r. *forms*. p. 27. l. 18. for *wherever* r. *whatsoever*. p. 31. l. 21. for *this* r. *their*. p. 38. l. 8. dele *our*. p. 41. l. 26. for *Revelation* r. *Religion*. p. 42. l. 5. for *clear* r. *clearer*. p. 45. l. 18. for *Union* r. *Unity*. p. 61. l. 10. for *Terms* r. *Forms*. *ibid.* last line but one, for *Church-Terms* r. *Church-Forms*. p. 64. l. 14. for *Terms* r. *Forms*.

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